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GIVEN IN HONOR OF HIS PARENTS, THEIR SIMPLICITY
SINCERITY AND FEARLESSNESS



Die Martis, 22. October, 1644.

IT is this day Ordered by the Commons assembled in Parliament, That Mr. *Asbursf*, and Mr. *Gourdon*, do from this Houfe give thanks to Mr. *Vmes*, for the great pains he took in the Sermon he preached this day at the intreaty of the Commons at *St. Margarets, Westminster*; It being a Day especially fet apart for a publick Humiliation, and to desire him to print his Sermon. And it is Ordered, that none shall presume to print his Sermon without being authorized under the hand-writing of the said Mr. *Vines*.

H. Elsing Cler. Parl. D. Com.

I appoint *Abel Roper* to print this Sermon.

Richard Vines.



THE
POSTURE
OF
DAVIDS SPIRIT,
In a doubtful condition.

OPENED
In a Sermon Preached before the
Honourable HOUSE
OF
COMMONS,

At *Margarets Westminster*, upon
October 22. 1644. Being a Day especially
set apart for a Publick Humiliation.

By Richard Vines, *Minister of the Gospel at Weddington in the County of Warwick, and one of the Assembly of DIVINES.*

Job 9. 22. He destroyeth the Perfect and the Wicked.

L O N D O N,
Printed by J. M. for Abel Roper, at the Signe of the Sun over
against S. Dunstons Church in Fleet-street, 1656.

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To the Honourable House of Com-
mons Assembled in Parliament
at WESTMINSTER.



If you please to read this Ser-
mon, then bear in your minde
the Aspect of Time under
which it was born. The Sea-
son will render the Theme more Savory.
It was when your United Armies were
conceiv'd to be near Engagement into a
Dispute, the Event whereof might have
brought forth a Decretory Sentence upon
the great Matter in Question. The Ar-
my wherewith you were to Encounter, as
in it self, it was not contemptible, so doubt-
lesse it did bear it self upon the Reputati-
on of that Check lately given to You in the
West: God was to be sought unto as the
great and only Moderator, we could be in

The Epistle Dedicatory.

no better posture of spirit, than to cast up
all events with humble resignation of our
All up unto God, so as to cast, yea to cast
away our selves upon him. If it were out
of date, as to the Publick (as it is not) yet
it may well serve to the Meridian of any
godly man in a doubtful or perplexed condi-
tion. The Lord continue to set marks
of his Favour both upon you, and the Cause
of his Churches, So Prays

**Your Servant in the
Lord Christ,**

RICHARD VINES.



A Sermon Preached before the Honorable House of Commons, upon their Extraordinary day of Humiliation, *Octob. 22. 1644.*

2 Sam. 15. ver. 25, 26.
And the King said unto Zadok the Priest, carry back the Ark of God into the City. If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation.

But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto me.

HE Religious King *Jehoshaphat* hearing that *Moab, Ammon, and Others* were in march against him, took the alarm, and first drew up his people into a posture of Fasting and Prayer, *2 Chron. 20, 1, 2, 3.* and the answer from God was present, for the Spirit of the Lord came upon a man in the midst of the Congregation, *v. 14* and he said, Harken ye all *Judah*, and ye Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and thou King *Jehoshaphat*. Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismay'd by reason of this great multitude, *For the Battel is not yours, but Gods, Ye shall not need to fight in this battel, set your selves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord, v. 15, 16.*

Had I such a message from God unto you at this time, or such as that which *Paul* deliver'd to them in the Ship with him, when

when they seemed to be at the last cast: *There shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you*, Acts 27. 24. it would be a good *Break fast* unto you; but such is the case of Gods people sometimes, that the Prophet being asked, *Can these Bones live?* answered, *O Lord God thou knowest*, Ezeck. 37. 3. and they in Joel 2. 14. were at their *quis novit?* *Who knoweth if God will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?* As David in this Text was at his *If, and If. If I shall find favour, &c.* But if he say *I delight not in thee, &c.*

The Text holds forth unto you the equal temperament, and the even poize or posture of a gracious spirit in a doubtful condition: He whose heart is steered by such a Compass, will ride even in all strait Seas whatsoever. I shall but briefly touch the historical part, because it hath not much influence into the Text.

Absalom had stolen the hearts of Israel into an Insurrection against his Father, the Conspiracy was both sudden and strong. *David* being in fear of surprisal, resolves to flee from *Jerusalem*. There was a hand of God in this, for he had told *David* beforehand, that for the matter of *Uriah* he would raise up evil against him out of his own house, 2 Sam. 12. 11. Now it is come to pass, The Priests and Levites would go with *David*, bearing the Ark of God: But whatsoever superstitious conceit the people had in bringing the Ark of God from *Shiloh* into the Camp against the Philistines; *David* had none, for he had learned by that example, that even the Ark might fall into Philistines hands, 1 Sam. 4. 3. Therefore he said to *Zacok*, carry back the Ark of God into the City; If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and I shall see it and his habitation, *ἡ ἐν ἐμοὶ αὐτῶν*, say the Septuagint: *The Beauty or Excellencie of it*: But if he say thus, *I delight not in thee, Here I am*. Where you find no discomposure or variations of spirit in *David*, no exclaiming against the impiety of his Son, or against the unkindness and ingratitude of Israel, no cursing of his stars, no bitter invectives against male-instruments, for these things are but the sludge that is usually cast forth by the overflow of distempered spirits.

But being of an equilibrinous frame of spirit, lays himself down at the feet of God, whether he please to lift him up, or tread

tread upon him, and in happy compofure of himfelf comes to an anchor, even then when in regard of the event of the ftorm, he is at his *if* and *if*.

There are fix things in the Text which I might work upon, as affording feafonable matter for this time.

1. *David* refolves all into God, all events and iffues, whether they be *pro* or *con*, for good or evil. *If I find favour, &c. but if he fay thus, &c.*

2. He makes Gods favour to him, the ground of Gods reftoring him, or bringing him back again; *If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again.*

3. He cafts up the events both wayes, not being able to refove the fcales either one way or other. *If fo, then thus. If fo, then fo.*

4. Every way he is refolved to be at Gods difpofe, if the worft come that can come, yet faith he, *Here I am.*

5. He ftates his happinefs to confift in the fruition of God, and of his Ordinances. *He will bring me again, and fhew me both his Ark and his habitation.*

6. His affliction or utter overthrow he expreffeth by this phrafe; Good in Gods eyes. *Let him do to me that which is good in his eyes.*

David refolves all events into God, whether *pro* or *con*, for good or evil. It could not be but a time of fear and grief unto him, had he looked to the clouds that were now thickning againft him, God was now remembering his former hainous fins, and the people were up in arms, but he feems not to value or caft up that which made againft him, So as to overthrow his faith or dependance upon God, as it is faid of *Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 19. & κατενόησε, He considered not.* His own body being dead, &c. that is, he vied not any improbabilities againft God, fo neither doth *David* confider things, either 1. To fink under the reckoning of fuch things as threatned him. The unkindnefs of his beloved fon, *cap. 16. 11. My fon that came out of my bowels.* The defection of the people from him. *Cap. 15. ver. 13. The hearts of the men of Ifrael are after Abjalom.* The ftrength of the confpiracy, *ver. 12. the confpiracy was ftong.* The wisdom and policy of the enemy, *ver. 31. Achitophel is among*

Doct. I.

among them. The suddenness of the insurrection, *ver. 14. Arise, let us flee, for we shall not else escape.*

Or 2. to bear himself up by such things as might seem to make for him, *Jerusalem* adhered to him in their affections; the Priests and Levites followed him, all the countrey thereabout wept for him: *ver. 23.* some faithful men were resolved to run the same hazard with him.

But whatsoever made either against him or for him, as if the total sum on both sides had been but Cyphers set over against one another. He resolves himself and all into God, if I find favour in his eyes, &c. but if he say thus, I delight not in thee, &c. and if we view *David* well, we shall observe, that he was a man very happy in this frame of spirit. Doth *Michol* scoff him for his zeal? *I will be more vile*, saith he, it is for God. Doth *Shimei* curse him? it's God that hath bidden him. Hath he lost all at *Ziglag*? why yet he encouraged himself in God. Doth he flie before his son? he resigns himself up into the hand of God, and indites a Psalm, namely the *third Psalm*, wherein is the first *Solah* in all the book of Psalms, he had it seems his *elevations* of spirit even at this time, what an excellent spirit is there in a godly man; he will be happy either in the fruition of God in peace: or in submission to God under calamity: he is *τελευτωμενος*, hath a square side to fall upon, be he thrown where or how the enemy can.

Use.

That which I draw from this first head by way of Use, is to exhort you to resolve all your thoughtfulness, cares, fears, doubts, questions upon God, What without use of means? No, that's madness, as we must sow to the Spirit, so we must serve Providence. God will not be tempted into miracles, *David* at this time had sent forth his espials and intelligencers, he had a counter-mining *Hushai* in the counsels of the enemy: To have means in our hand, and not to use them, is *secure unbelief*, to use them and trust in them, is *proud unbelief*, and this is our epidemick sin, when we ride upon the arm of flesh, then we gallop, when we are unhorsed and smitten off that, then we lie despondent and cannot keep our legs, either we swell or sink; in our victory and successes hitherto God hath first shewn us the vanity of our strength, and then made bare his own arm. It's even some

some loss to our selves, that he must restrain for his honour before we give it to him. In our successes we are proud rather than thankful, in our strokes we are rather broken than humbled, oh that we would cast away these bladders that help to drown us. The stile of man is *Alexander* or *Cæsar* hath gotten such a victory; But the stile of Scripture is, *The Lord discomfited Sisera before Barak*, Judges 4.15, 23. It was said the sword of the Lord and of *Gideon*. How poor an Army was it with which the sword of the Lord was coupled, yet the victory was so exemplary and signal, that it is made a pattern of an utter overthrow, *Isa. 9.4. as in the day of Midian*; and again, *do to them as to the Midianites*, Psal. 83.9. and therefore as it is in Tragædies when the scene is come to such a paroxysm, or such a knot as there seems to be no way out: then *Deus à machina*, comes in and heals all. So when things are doubtful, desperate, inextricable, let God have your eyes, who can resolve every riddle, and lead you out of the Labyrinth.

And there is reason for it, why at such a time as this, when there is so much at stake, you should resolve all your thoughts into God; because *events and issues are his*, duty is yours, but issues are out of your Sphere. The Enemy may heat his Oven, but he cannot make the fire to burn the three children. *Balaam* may set up his Altars, and offer his sacrifices, but he cannot speak enchantments when he hath done all he can. It may be observed, that though the devil begin the tragedy with *Job*, and the Sabeans and Caldeans act in it, yet the end is not called theirs, it is *τὸ τέλος κυρίου*, *James 5. 11. The end of the Lord*. Whatsoever the premises may be, God draws the conclusion, and that by another manner of inference than is in our mood and figure, we have this hope, that if God bring his people into the Wilderness, he will also bring them out. *He will give them their vineyards from thence, and the Valley of Achor for a door of hope*, Hos. 2. 15. Let us not trouble our selves about that which is Gods work and not ours, let us not only look at the storm that threatens us, but to the steers-man, that sits at the helm to Pilot us through all difficulties. *Noah* need not beat his head about a Mountain or place for the Ark to rest upon, God will find an *Ararat* in the end.

He makes Gods favour to him, the ground of Gods restoring of him, or bringing him back again; *If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again.* Free grace is the refuge or the plea of the most righteous man. *Noah* was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and walked with God, and he found favour (saith the Text, *Gen. 6. 8.*) in the eyes of the Lord; but some may say, Why doth *David* appeal to favour? was he not innocent as to *Absalom*, who rose up against him? and as to them that rose up with *Absalom*? was there not sin in the adverse party? and godliness on his part? there is no question of it; but yet *David* had former sins which were now remembred to him, and he flies to meer grace and favour, and insists on that plea. It was favour and meer grace that put *Noah* into an Ark, when all the world besides was drowned; And what is it but Grace and Favour, that hath shut you up into an Ark of safety: Now when so many Families and Countries are brought under spoil and misery, and (which is not the least part of mercy) hath freed you from temptations of betraying either your lives or your consciences, and from being put to such disguisements of your selves, as *David* was, when he changed his behaviour before the Philistines, *1 Sam. 21. 13.* When God comes down in judgement against a people, there is ordinarily a reason to be found in themselves. The Mariners knew that the storm fell upon them for some cause, and therefore they went to the lot. And *David* when the famine did hang upon the Land from year to year, inquired of the Lord for what it was, *2 Sam. 21. 1.* And for our own case, there is certainly a reason in our selves why the Sword is so long in our bowels, which we should search out upon these dayes of inquiry; for the smarting corrosive would drop off, if it did not find raw matter in the sore, which makes it stick fast, and eat into the quick. But now for the matter of our recovery, if ever God bring us again to shew us his Ark, and his Habitation, it must, it will be meer grace and favour, which grace is as powerful as it is free: Powerful, I say, to break through all obstructions, lay flat all Mountains of opposition, remove all impediments; and therefore it is said; *If I find favour, he will bring me again; let Absalom, let Achitophel,*

chitophel, let them all do what they can: As some worthy Divines do assert grace to work irresistibly in a mans conversion, so may I assert it as irresistible in reducing and bringing back his Churches and people, from under the yoke of any enemy; God that works graciously, works omnipotently, and we know as *little Way as How*. This is that which doth most indear God to an unworthy sinner, and which doth most kindly melt the heart towards God again. Nothing doth so at once ravish the heart into admiration, and lay it low in self-confusion.

The Inferences which I draw from this Point by way of Use to our selves, are these;

1. Doth *David* now at this time when he might easily in his affliction see his former sins, the greatest that are recorded of him in the Scripture, Fasten his eye upon the free grace and favour of God, as to which his restoring was possible? then why may not we, who are now under wrath for those many heynous National sins of ours, fly to this free grace of God, and therein likewise apprehend a possibility of our restoring, we are not shut out by our sins from free grace; that which takes away our iniquities, is not taken away by them, all the aggravations of our sin, do not prohibit our application to it, nor bind the hands thereof.

2. In that *David* builds not upon the ground of either the enemy his wickedness, or his own godliness and integrity, but derives his bringing back again from meer favour: it may teach us to cast away all false flattering arguments, which are the foundations of our proud hopes; one while we look on the prophaneness and wickedness of our enemies, and gather thence a kind of self-presumption, as though God might not use such Scorpions to correct his own people withal; or not sell the *Israelites* into the hand of *Moab, Ammon, Philistines*, people worse than themselves; otherwhiles we applaud our own godliness and sincerity, and do bottom our expectations rather upon somewhat in our selves, than the free grace and favour of God to us.

David calls up the events both ways; If the Lord will shew me favour, then thus. If he say, I delight not in thee, then so: *Doct. 3.*
He

He could not resolve himself as touching the particular what God would do with him. And are not we in a like predicament at this time? doth not the Lord hold us in suspense? and is not the ship filled with water again, after that it hath been pumped almost empty? is there yet any certain *νεῖς* of our estate? *David* might have said something for himself. Himself was a godly man, an honest party adhered to him. The Priests and Levites were ready to follow him; and these things were good abodements; yet he saith, *if and if*, and so it may be with us; and therefore we ought to cast up events both wayes, not to create doubtings in our selves, or distrust in God, but

1. To this end, That we may be fortified against the offence and scandal that may be taken, if we should see Christ Jesus led to be arraigned, and crucified, for what would become of us then, that have alwayes expected a temporal and flourishing estate from him? Might we not for want of forecast of such a thing come to warm our selves at the High Priests fire, and earn it full dearly, with a *non putaram*, or with the denial of our Lord.

2. To the end that we may know our own hearts, for he that feeds himself with confidence that he shal never be moved, shal never know his spirit what mettall it is of, the *λογισμοί*, or reasonings of his heart will never be known unto him, for is it not plain enough, that many *Samaritans* that claim kindred of the *Jews*, whiles they prosper, do disclaim their acquaintance when they see them going down? are not many of us friends to the fortune of the cause, and not to the cause it self? Durst *Shimei* open his mouth against *David*, until he saw him flying? Put the case then both wayes, and search your hearts, whether your compass will not vary at such a time, but still point to the true pole, and whether you can and will abide in the Ship, when it seems near to breaking all to pieces.

And there is reason why we should cast up events both wayes, not so much in respect of the cause it self, as in respect of our resolutions and standing to it, for the cause of God and of Religion will prosper, and will swim out of all waters; of that we have no doubt, though the *vision be yet for an appointed time*. Though God drive with *Abraham* until the date of his bo-

body be out, yet the promise shall beget *Isaac* out of a dead root; and if there shall not be left an Israelite to rescue the Ark of God out of the Philistims hands, the Ark shall rescue it self, and come home alone.

This is our confidence as concerning the cause of God in it self, and as touching our selves, God hath not left us hopeless, for he hath a great harvest of his faithful people in this Land, and no Husbandman ever laid his field fallow, while the corn was yet standing upon the ground, until he had inned his crop, but yet there is reason why we should cast up both events.

The first reason, I shall gather up into three heads.

Reason I.

1. The sins we lie in and under. 2. The unpreparedness that is in us to close with God, his way, his truth. 3. The ill symptoms that put forth themselves in us.

1. The sins we lie in and under, and first that mass of National sin, which hath been gathering into a heap for fourscore years together and upward, sins of all kinds under the Gospel, and against the Gospel, Idolatry, oppression, abuse of plenty and peace, as the Apostle saith of the works of the flesh, *Gal. 5. 19. They are manifest, which are these, and such like.* So I say of the sins of this Nation, their aggravations are great, themselves are great. If I should go about to number them, I must adde an *et-cetera* at the end, as the Apostle doth, and these are they which may justly put in a caveat, or a *notwithstanding* in our way, as the sins of *Manasses* did to the Reformation made by *Josiah*, *2 Kings 23. 26. Notwithstanding the Lord turned not away from the fierceness of his great wrath;* But then secondly, our *Wilderness-sins* threaten us much. For as it was not *Israels Egypt* sins which shut them out of *Canaan*, and held them so long in the Wilderness, but their *Wilderness-sins*; so they are our *Wilderness-sins*, that presage ill to us, those I mean that are upon us, since God came down to plead with us face to face, and to bring us upon the way, and they are our want of sound Humiliation and brokenness of heart; for though we be broken yet we are not humbled: we are broken in our families, in our estates; The Kingdom is broken with our sins, and with the sword, but our hearts are not broken for our sin. We are as weary of our fasts, as of our wars: our solemn dayes are wan-

tonized

ronized with curled, bare and spotted pride to this day: our sackcloth is grown into a fashion and form, and by many laid aside, the sword draws forth our blood, because sin draws not forth our tears: surely God hath an answer ready to that question; *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?* Isa. 5. 8, 3. O that the Land would own its own sins! for though we can all cry, *It is sin*, yet when we should come to particulars, Then it is with us as with *Josephs* brethren: *Thou didst it*, and *Thou didst it*. The serpent, said she: the people, saith *Saul*: the people, saith *Aaron*; We all acknowledge that there is sin amongst us, somewhere in the general, nowhere in particular: the people lay the blame on the Magistrate, the Magistrate on the people, and so our sins are never found at home; let us survey ourselves, and deal impartially. Are not self-ends served upon the publick calamities, by such as come to the common scarre fire, not to quench it, but to fish for what they can get? Is there not a great neglect of personal reformation, even by such as cry for reformation Ecclesiastical? Is the power of godliness sought by them who call for purity of Ordinances? is not charity cold? I might call it Justice toward those that have drained their own Wells dry, and cannot now get water to quench their thirst? are there not delays and obstructions of Justice? are there not miscarriages in inferiour officers and instruments that are too sharp bitten, and prey for themselves under colour of service to the State? And may not the Lord renew that old saying: *For three transgressions, and for four I will not turn away the punishment of your Land*, Amos 1. ver. 3, 6, &c.

2. The unpreparedness that is in us to close with God, his way and truth, many think it religion enough to cry *King and Parliament*, with them the power of godliness lies under as great scorn and disrelish as ever, and though we have ingaged our selves by Covenant, yet is that Covenant made by many but as it were a *fast and loose knot*, or a meer *Shibboleth* of distinction between party and party, how many are willing to compound for such Reformation as may serve self-interests, or poliick respects, making their own ends the standard of Reformation, not the Word or glory of God? What fear is there in many of the

the strictness of it? What jealousie least it should clip the wings of civil Authority, and Power? being startled at the name of *ius divinum*, as *Herod* was, when he heard of one that should be born *King* of the Jewes, a vain fear. For he that saith, *By me Kings reign*, doth not by his Gospel pull them down *date Deo*, and *date Casari*, are no wayes inconsistent.

The Symptoms that are upon us, are very ill abodements, as namely, the divisions and sidings in matter of Religion, which is first turned into a kind of Philosophy of Opinions, and then divided into Parties and Sects, as the old Philosophers were; After the great and general Deluge of corruption of Doctrine, and Superstition in Worship, we are fallen into the confusion of Languages. And then again, what emulations in Officers that have great command? As if they had an *Alexander*, or a *Cesar*, or a *Pompey* in their breasts, making too much ado about punctilio's of honour? what dissensions in the Countrey between Committees and Commanders, the one accusing the other for plowing away a Furrow of his Land, and the other ~~accriminating~~ the like; and whiles they come up hither to contest the difference, the Plow stands? what should I speak of driving of designs, and of the carriage of many in this cause, meerly by interests, and not by principles, which kind of men can never be firm, for interests will make any man loose and uncertain: He hath the Byass in his Pocket, which he can put off and put on, as the mark lies; nothing makes men firm but principles, for such a mans Byass is within the bowl, especially if his principles carry him to God, as well as you; for otherwise he will not be alwayes yours. Now if all these things be laid together, they make good reason why we should cast up both events.

The wayes and dispensations of God towards us are so dark, as by them we are not able to discern clearly of his particular mind or thoughts, as touching the issue or event, when we are (as we think) at shore, and ready to land, there comes a gulf, and waves us back into the deep again. The Ark is carrying to *Jerusalem*, and there falls out a breach upon *Uzzah*, and stops the work. The War hangs long upon us, and who knows where, or when the Tragedy shall end. How long have the

German Churches (where the first day-break of Reformation began) been under a thick cloud, and many a time when they have seemed to see land, they have been driven back again with cross winds. Thus do the wayes of God, like *Arethuse*, run under-ground. He hides his paths and his ends, and he is in the thick darkness; so that we see his goings: but are as much to seek for the meaning of his dispensations, as the Boy was, that ran to fetch *Jonathans* Arrows, whereby he made discovery to *David*.

This we know, That God hath not pinned his Ordinances to the freehold of a Land, Nation, City; therefore he saith, *Jer. 7. 12. Go and see what I did to Shiloh, where I set my Name at the first*; and what was that which he did to it? *Psal. 78. 60, 61. He forsook the Tabernacles of Shiloh, the Tent that he had pitched among them, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand; whence it may be affirmed, That though God do not altogether remove his Name from the Israelites, yet he may change the place thereof, from Shiloh to Jerusalem*; and so though he do plant his Ordinances somewhere in his Church, yet the Candlestick may be removed, and the Kingdom of Heaven taken away from this or that particular Place or Nation.

Use.

The Use that I shall make of this Point, is, to call you to this casting up of events that may fall out, to the end you may be able to justifie God if he turn his hand against you, and that you may for your own parts come to a Center of resolution, that let God do what he will with your particular persons; yet you will serve the Lord, as in *Joshua 24. 19. When Joshua had told the people, he is a jealous God, and a holy, he will not forgive your Transgressions and your sins, they answered, Nay, but we will serve the Lord*; and thereupon he set up a great stone for a witness, lest they should afterwards deny God: Let us set up such a stone of witness this day, that we may not turn away from the Lord our God, but ingage our selves to be his people for ever.

It is not my purpose to weaken the faith of the people of God, but to confirm their resolutions, nor to give the enemy any occasion to say; Now they stagger, they mistrust their cause

cause, the Wilderness hath shut them in ; No, no, for whatsoever may become of our carcasses in this Wilderness, though they may fall therein for our rebellions against, and temptations of God ; yet for certain, *Israel* shall come into the Land of rest, for howsoever it be that Gods wayes towards us be in the dark, yet his promises to the Church are in the clear light. Our dry bones are not too dry to live again by his breath ; Though he carry *Joseph* into a prison, it is but to advance him ; Though he thrust *Jonas* into the Whales belly, it is but to save him. When the Ship is wrackt and broken, and the foundations (as the Psalmist saith) are destroyed, yet *adificabo ecclesiam meam* will stand good against the very gates of Hell. And we may build upon it as a truth, that however his works of providence may seem to us, not to answer his Word of promise ; yet all his dispensations towards his Churches, are in order to the fulfilling of his Promises, and the pangs of his Church are unto life, and not unto death ; I say the pangs or throws of his Church, because I conceive, that these motions that are in Christendome, this renting of States and Kingdoms, is in order to some revolutions in the Churches ; all these conspirations of stormy winds ingruent upon them, are not for nothing : *Doth the ploughman plough all the day to sow ? doth he open and break the clods of his ground, when he hath made plain the face thereof ? doth he not cast in the principal wheat ? &c.* Isa. 28. 4. God will sow his Churches after his tearing them up by the Plough ; and therefore whatsoever Statesmen and Politicians may aim at, it is the Churches interest which the eye of God is upon, though they neither know nor intend it. As the Scripture taking notice of *Augustus* his Decree of taxing or enrolling the Empire or Provinces thereof, seems to give us the reason and occasion of bringing *Joseph* and *Mary* to *Bethlehem*, (who were far off the place) that Christ might be born according to the Scriptures, which was a thing the Emperour never once dreamed of. God hath other ends and purposes in these shakings of Kingdoms and Provinces, than Politicians and Statesmen have, therefore let us not discredit God by unbelief, for my Covenant is to me (saith he) *as the waters of Noah*, that is, my purpose to my people, to do them good is irreverfible and absolute, *Isa.* 54. 10.

But then for our particulars. Though the waters of *Noah* return no more to cover the earth, yet such a House, City, Country may be overflowed and swallowed up with water; so may our Ark fall into Philistims hands; and therefore gather your selves together, search your selves Oh Nation, even Ye our worthy Senators, call your selves to account, and examine your selves strictly, impartially, humbly, lest the Babylonish garment, and wedge of Gold (which causes *Israel* to fly before the men of *Ai*) be not in any of your Tents, search out carnal policy, luke-warmnets towards God; Neutrality, private ends. It's not impossible but that there may be an *Absalom*, a *Shemei* in your own bowels, who if you were brought low, would drive you and the Ark of God too into the Wilderness, to seek a place. Oh let the representative body of the Kingdom keep themselves pure, that so if God should please to estimate, or measure out unto the Nation, according to the representative body of it, there may be mercy to it for your sakes. To this end, have an eye [I beseech you] upon obstructours and designers, which cannot do so much hurt in the enemies Army, as in your Counsels; Malignity thrust forth into the outward parts of the body, is nothing so dangerous, as that which lies close and near to the heart or vitals: Speed the hearing of Causes which come before you, that men may be dismiss'd to their commands and employments abroad to prevent a *vacuum*. Pity and relieve those that are broken and shipwrackt for the Kingdoms sake: have an eye upon your under-Instruments and Officers, that they spend you not more honour and reputation by their miscarriages, partialities, private gain: than they bring you in supplies; he that flies a sharp Hawk, rides hard after her, or else the Partridge will be half eaten before he come in; And fear not the losing of any party by doing Gods will and work; for God himself should neither give rain nor fair weather, if he should please all sorts of men; I shall less stick on these things, because you were this day before put in mind of them; only let me press one thing more, namely; That you would countenance honest and godly men, with places of command and trust; *With command*, for they will be firm and valiant, *a mans valour lies in his conscience, and not in his*

his spirit: With trust, for such a man is like a door with two locks: He hath an obligation upon him, both to God and you. Finally, Do all that may be to suppress open and crying sins, for Authority makes it self guilty of those, *other mens sins*, which it endeavours not to cut down, we in the Ministry must cry them down, and you must cut them down, or else they become in guilt both ours and yours.

And let none of us say within our selves, we have strength for War, for, *Eccles. 11. 9. The Battel is not to the strong.* We have received many marks and tokens of favour from God, for *Josh. 24. 19. He will consume you after he hath done you good.* We are the Israel of God, to whom pertain the Promises, for *Josh. 7. 8. Israel flies before the Aians;* We have the Ark of God in the Camp with us, for, *1 Sam. 4. 10, 11. The Philistims may take it,* We fast before the Lord, and have a good cause, for, *Judg. 20. 21. Israel falls in two Battels under Benjamin.* We are not so bad as the enemy that comes against us; *For its no trusting to the sins of an enemy.* The worst bryars or thorns may serve for a Rod in the Land of God, to scourge his own people: We are Gods Witnesses, for, *Rev. 11. 7. The bea? that ascends out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome and kill them.* In a word, the Axe that cuts down the Tree, is hasted with the wood of the same Tree; the enemies power over us, lies in our own sins: And so much for this Point.

David is resolved to be every way at Gods dispose, *Here am I.* A happy frame of spirit it is, to be able to perish, and resign our selves up to God; for such a man shall be alwayes in possession of himself, out of the gun-shot of all storms and tempests; steeled with courage and resolution; and however he be tossed too and fro, up and down, yet shall alwayes light upon his feet. If *Canna* bring *Hannibal* to the very walls of *Rome*, if wave arise after wave, if Pillars be shaken, if rotten Boughs fall off the Tree with winds, if *Absolom* stir, *Israel* be up, *Skimei* curse, yet he is at this Point, *Here I am.*

Doct. 4.

I have not much to say upon this Point, This is the sum. Do your duty, and perish in it: *Si fractus illabatur orbis;* Conscience of sincerity, and uprightness of heart in duty, will make a man sing, *Ecce Ego, Here am I.* *Middle region* men, and lo-

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er Region, must be tossed and weather-beaten, they live and have their treasure, where winds and clouds, and waves come; but he is in the Serene, and above all these whose hope the Lord is, you may be sooner killed than hurt; and if God should deliver you up to the enemy, and bring in difficult Times, be sure that there is few of them that hate you now, but would be ready to write upon the statue of each one of you that lives and dies faithful, *utinam viveres*; or if such dayes should come, that men shall be afraid to name your names, or own your worth; yet as it was said of the Pictures of those Patriots that durst not come forth and appear in after-times. *Eo magis fulgebant quia non visibantur*, they shined the more, because they were not to be seen. Be true to God, to his Truth, it will save you; but if there be any of you that come in and adhere to God and his Cause only for shelter and safety, that is not thank-worthy with God, no man thanks another for being driven into his house to stand dry in a shower.

That you may be able to say, *Here I am*, when God shall please to declare that he hath no delight in you, these things are requisite.

1. To have a good Conscience on your side, that will feast you within doors, even when the Hailstones rattle upon the Tiles of the house; you know what *Luther* said, when he was convented before the Emperor at *Wormes*, No winds shake the earth, but those within it. If you be in a good cause, that is not all, for hypocrisie and base ends will more pull you down, than the goodness of the cause will lift you up.

It's a terrible thing to be hem'd in by the wrath of God on one side, and the galling of a guilty conscience on the other side. He that dare not face his own conscience, must needs fly from the presence and sight of God, he cannot say, *Here I am*.

2. A submissive faith to trust God, and leave your selves in his hand, accepting the punishment of your iniquity with silence and justification of God, lying down as patiently under his knife, as *Isaac* under *Abrahams*.

3. Acquaintance with God, so as to lay up your lives with Christ in God, having tasted his goodness to you in former experiences, such a man may be killed all but the head, but that's above

above the reach of any enemy, and though he be forsaken, yet he carries, *My God, my God*, with him, from the cross to his grave.

David states his happiness to consist in the fruition of God and his ordinances: *He will bring me again, and shew me his Ark, and the habitation of it.* He saith not, he will bring me to my house again, to my Concubines which are left behind; but he will shew me his Habitation; The Ark and the Temple were the things that he accounted worth the enjoying; and here you may observe what a godly heart looks at, not revenues and trading, but Gods Ark and Habitation. The Roman Historians observe how the first seven Kings did contribute to the State of Rome. *Romulus* the first, gave it *esse*, then *Pompilius* the next, brought in the *sacra*, Religion is indeed the very keel of the ship. The main work we have to do, is to settle it, and it's our greatest wages, to see it establisht, it will pay us for all our layings out.

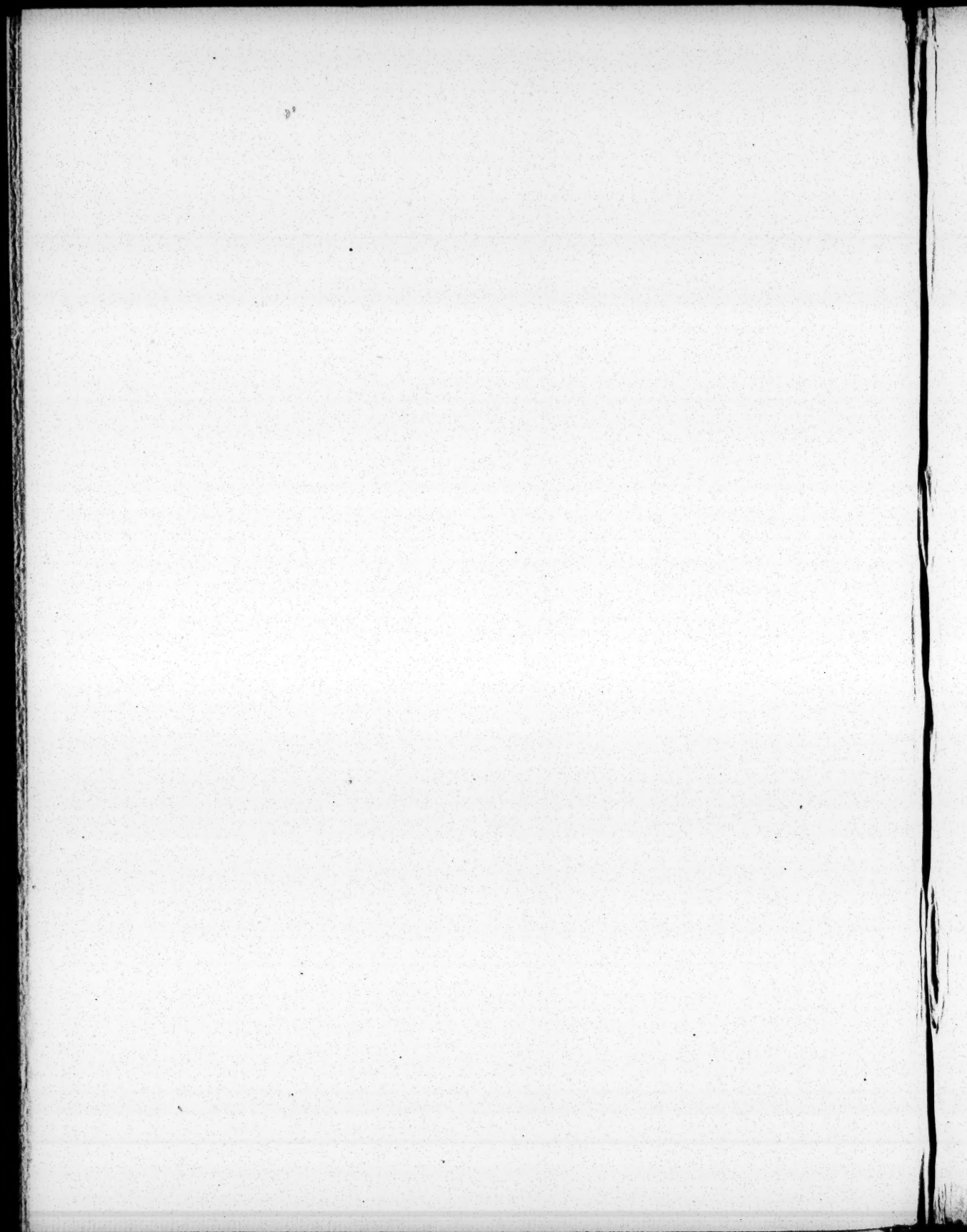
Let the same mind be in you, as was at this time in David, account it your happiness, and the most lively mark of Gods favour to you, if he shall bring you again, and shew unto you his Ark and his Habitation, for therein lies the glory of *Israel*. I would the Reformation did not lie under an ill report with many amongst us. God would not bring the Israelites into *Canaan* whilst it was under an ill report with them by reason of the spies who undervalued it. It may cost us a longer march in this Wilderness, if we look upon it with a scornful eye, and yet the prejudices against it, and the aspersions cast upon them whom you have set on work to be hewers in the Mountains to prepare the materials of the Temple, are many; and I fear the reason is, because *nothing that is one can please*, except it be a *quodlibet*; a grand faller, it will not fit such variety of palates as are amongst us, I pray God such a birth may be brought forth, as that there may remain no divisions or separation from us in conscience, but only in pride and affected singularity; there is the less regard to be had of such as are resolved aforehand, not to be fixed in the same, or be with us, but like the erratick stars, must each one have an orb to himself. If any mans conscience lye (as I may so say) in his fancy, then to give liberty

v. 6.

liberty to that, would be nothing else but to give him leave to be mad.

David expresses his sufferings, yea his utmost sufferings, by the phrase, *Good in Gods eyes*, *If he say thus, I delight not in thee, Here I am, let him do that is good in his eyes*: He might feel it evil, but if it be good in Gods eyes, he yields to it; and so let our hearts be humbled and framed in expectation of Gods hand to us at this time, that we may kiss the rod, and say with old *Eli*, when he heard the fall of his house: *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. We know not what Promises or Prophecies God hath given forth to his Church in his Word to be served and fulfilled by or upon our ruines: If God please not to honour himself by our labours, let him honour himself by our ashes.

F I N I S.



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